

Docket No. AUS920010687US1

**CLAIMS:**

What is claimed is:

1. A method for preventing the computer recognition of data, comprising:
  - 5 receiving a request to print a document;  
modifying text in the document based on at least one user preference so that the text cannot be recognized by a character recognition algorithm; and  
printing the document.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of modifying comprises randomizing at least one attribute.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of randomizing comprises randomizing the at least one attribute on a character by character basis.
- 15 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of randomizing comprises randomizing the attribute on a word by word basis.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one attribute comprises at least one of character rotation;  
20 typeface; font size; character effect; and spacing offset.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of modifying comprises at least one of using an uncommon font;  
introducing a background image or a background color;  
25 introducing a gradient film to a background of the document; reversing background and foreground of

200407-01000

Docket No. AUS920010687US1

characters; and reversing background and foreground of portions of characters.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one user preference comprises a readability value.

5 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the step of modifying comprises enabling modification techniques and setting modification limits based on the readability value.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving the at least one user preference from a  
10 user.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of receiving the at least one user preference comprises:  
presenting a user interface.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the user interface  
15 comprises a slide bar.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the at least one user preference comprises a readability value that is set using the slide bar.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of  
20 modifying comprises enabling modification techniques and setting modification limits based on the readability value.

14. An apparatus for preventing the computer recognition of data, comprising:

Docket No. AUS920010687US1

receipt means for receiving a request to print a document;

modification means for modifying text in the document based on at least one user preference so that the text cannot be recognized by a character recognition algorithm; and

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printing means for printing the document.
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15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the modification  
means comprises means for randomizing at least one  
10 attribute.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the at least one attribute comprises at least one of character rotation; typeface; font size; character effect; and spacing offset.

15 17. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the modification  
means comprises at least one of means for using an  
uncommon font; means for introducing a background image  
or a background color; means for introducing a gradient  
film to a background of the document; means for reversing  
20 background and foreground of characters; and means for  
reversing background and foreground of portions of  
characters.

18. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the at least one user preference comprises a readability value.

Docket No. AUS920010687US1

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the modification means comprises means for enabling modification techniques and setting modification limits based on the readability value.

- 5 20. A computer program product, in a computer readable medium, for preventing the computer recognition of data, comprising:

instructions for receiving a request to print a document;

- 10 instructions for modifying text in the document based on at least one user preference so that the text cannot be recognized by a character recognition algorithm; and

instructions for printing the document.

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